McCain letter and they were not interested in the facts, but were on a political "witch-hunt."[642]

Nonetheless, comments by several Committee members, including two Democratic Senators,

made clear that they felt the inquiry was well-justified and had been necessitated by Babbitt's

own curious statements.[643]

Babbitt said that when he testified before the Senate Committee, he realized that he did

not have a sufficient command of the facts regarding the Interior's consideration of the

application to refute the picture he thought was being painted in the hearing, that the BIA career

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[642]In responding to a question as to why he declined to be interviewed by the Committee, Babbitt explained his view of congressional hearings is that whoever runs them, they are not intended to ascertain truth:

> [T]his [the Senate committee hearing] wasn't a dispassionate inquiry. . . . [I was] not going to get up there and let them abuse process in the pretense of making an investigation. . . . [I]n light of what I know to this day, 90 percent of them are witch hunts; they're political show trials. They don't have a damn thing to do with trying to ascertain the truth. . . . They weren't interested in any kind of truth or an inquiry.

Babbitt G.J. Test., July 7, 1999, at 223-25.

[643]Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) stated:

> I think it's perfectly appropriate that you be called as a witness in light of your comment relative to Mr. Ickes. I think that does raise a question which appropriately should be addressed by you, so I think it's very appropriate indeed that you be given an opportunity to address that question.

Babbitt Senate Test. at 259. Similarly, Sen. Lieberman observed:

> You have given a series of answers regarding what you have said to Mr. Eckstein on that meeting on July 14, 1995, that I find puzzling and disconcerting, and to some extent, they may affect your credibility before the Committee. I want to give you another chance to explain what you have said here, beginning in the colloquy that you had with Chairman Thompson.

Id. at 263.